

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06

SIL-01 DRC-01 NIC-01 OPR-02 ACDA-19 IO-14 EUR-25 /192 W

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R 141046Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5259

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 5734

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: BHUTTO ON SECTARIAN AGITATION

SUMMARY: IN RADIO/TELEVISION ADDRESS JUNE 13, BHUTTO SAID AHMADIYA CONTROVERSY WILL BE CONSIDERED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JULY AFTER END OF CURRENT DEBATE ON BUDGET. HE SAID HE WOULD AGREE TO WHATEVER DECISIONS ASSEMBLY REACHED. SPEECH CAME TOO LATE TO STOP GENERAL STRIKE CALLED BY ULEMA JUNE 14. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO GAVE 75 MINUTE NATIONWIDE RADIO AND TELEVISION SPEECH JUNE 13 ON ANTI-AHMADIYA CONTROVERSY NOW RAGING IN PAKISTAN. RAMBLING, HIGHLY EMOTIONAL SPEECH DELIVERED IN URDU FOLLOWED THREE DAY'S DISCUSSIONS IN LAHORE WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND CAME ON EVE OF COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE CALLED BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND POLITICAL PARTIES TO INTENSIFY PRESSURE ON GOP TO ACCEPT THEIR DEMANDS FOR ACTIONS AGAINST AHMADIYA SECT.

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2. BHUTTO SAID THAT HE WOULD BRING AHMADIYA QUESTION BEFORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS SOON AS ASSEMBLY CONCLUDED CURRENT SESSION ON JUNE 30. HE FURTHER SAID MEMBERS OF HIS PEOPLES' PARTY, WHICH COMPRISE TWO-THIRDS OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP, WOULD NOT BE BOUND BY PARTY DISCIPLINE IN ASSEMBLY CONSIDERATION OF QUESTION, BUT WOULD BE FREE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN CONVICTIONS. HE PROMISED THAT HE WOULD BE BOUND BY WHATEVER DECISIONS ASSEMBLY REACHED, SUCH AS REFERRAL OF QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT AHMADIYAS WERE MUSLIMS TO ISLAMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL OR SUPREME COURT.

3. BHUTTO CAREFULLY DISASSOCIATED HIMSELF AND HIS GOVERNMENT FROM EITHER SIDE IN PRESENT CONTROVERSY, SAYING THAT HE WAS NOT COMPETENT TO DEAL WITH RELIGIOUS ISSUES. HOWEVER, HE WAS FIRM THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PREVENT BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER, WOULD PROTECT ALL MINORITY GROUPS, AND WOULD CALL ON ARMY ASSISTANCE, IF NECESSARY, TO PREVENT BLOODSHED. (ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF AND DEFENSE SECRETARY WERE PRESENT DURING LAHORE DISCUSSIONS ALONG WITH KEY CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.) ALTERNATING BETWEEN ANGER, SADNESS, RESIGNATION, SELF-PITY AND CONFIDENCE, BHUTTO SAID SECTARIAN ISSUE WAS LONG-STANDING PROBLEM WHICH HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED BY PREVIOUS REGIMES INCLUDING PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS LED BY RELIGIOUS FIGURES NOW IN FOREFRONT OF AGITATION. HE SAID THAT IF PAKISTANIS WISHED TO DESTROY OTHER PAKISTANIS THERE WAS LITTLE HE COULD DO TO PREVENT SUCH BEHAVIOR, YET PAKISTANIS SHOULD BE AWARE OF DAMAGE THEY WERE DOING TO COUNTRY IN PROCESS. BHUTTO WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT HIS MANY PROBLEMS - IN FOREIGN AS WELL AS DOMESTIC POLICY - AND SUGGESTED THAT UNGRATEFUL PUBLIC HAD ADDED ANOTHER AND UNWANTED PROBLEM TO HIS BURDENS. HE OBSERVED THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD THREATENED TO RESIGN OVER PROBLEM WHICH WAS MINOR IN COMPARISON WITH PROBLEM WHICH HE, PRIME MINISTER, FACED.

4. WITHOUT STRESSING POINT, BHUTTO CLAIMED THAT THERE WAS "FOREIGN HAND" BEHIND CURRENT AGITATION. HE COMMENTED THAT INDIAN NUCLEAR BLAST, VISIT OF DAUD TO MOSCOW, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND PRESENCE OF "PAKISTAN POLITICAL LEADER" (WALI KHAN ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT MENTIONED BY NAME) IN KABUL WERE NOT COINCIDENTAL AND WERE PART OF CHAIN OF CONSPIRACIES TAKING PLACE AGAINST INTEGRITY OF PAKISTAN.

5. COMMENT: BHUTTO'S SPEECH, HIS THIRD PROMOUNCEMENT SINCE REACTIVATION OF AHMADIYA CONTROVERSY ON MAY 29, CAME TOO LATE TO AFFECT GENERAL STRIKE CALL WHICH AT TIME THIS

REPORT IS BEING PREPARED WAS GENERALLY FOLLOWED IN MOST MAJOR CITIES, ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT OFFICES REMAINED OPEN. HIS DECISION TO REFER TO ASSEMBLY DEMANDS OF ULEMA THAT, INTER ALIA, AHMADIYAS BE OFFICIALLY DECLARED NON-MUSLIMS AND THAT AHMADIYAS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE BE SACKED, WAS PROBABLY ONLY WAY OUT OF CURRENT DISPUTE WHICH COULD RELIEVE HIM AND HIS GOVERNMENT OF ANY ONUS FOR WHATEVER DECISIONS ARE EVENTUALLY REACHED AND WHICH COULD POSSIBLY FORESTALL FUTURE PRESSURES FROM RELIGIOUS GROUPS ON SECTARIAN ISSUES. HAD HE CAPITULATED TO ULEMA DEMANDS, WHICH ARE PROBABLY DISTASTEFUL TO HIM PERSONALLY, HE WOULD HAVE OPENED PANDORA'S BOX OF DIVISIVE RELIGIOUS AND CASTE/COMMUNITY CONFLICTS. SUNNIS ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO MAJOR COMPETING RELIGIOUS FACTIONS NOT TO SPEAK OF SIZABLE SHIA COMMUNITY, ISMAILIS AND NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES. HE THUS HAS SIDESTEPED ATTEMPTS OF RELIGIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTICULARLY JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI AND JAMIATUL-ULEMA-I-ISLAM, TO FORCE HIM TO MAKE DECISION WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY DISSATISFY MANY SUNNI MUSLIMS AND ALARM SHIAS, ISMAILIS AND NON-MUSLIMS. BHUTTO, OF COURSE, ALSO TOOK REFUGE BEHIND ASSEMBLY DURING BANGLADESH RECOGNITION CONTROVERSY.

6. AS INDICATED ABOVE, SPEECH CAME TOO LATE TO HEAD OFF GENERAL STRIKE. EMBASSY ANTICIPATES THAT SOME VIOLENCE IS LIKELY TO OCCUR DURING DAY AS LARGE MOBS CONGREGATE IN MANY MAJOR CITIES DESPITE IMPOSITION OF BAN ON MEETINGS AND DEMONSTRATIONS. HOWEVER, WE WOULD ESTIMATE THAT BHUTTO'S SPEECH WILL PROBABLY TEND TO DIFFUSE AGITATION AGAINST AHMADIYAS. BYROADE

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